

## **APRIL 10**

### **Deuteronomy 34**

It is obvious reading this that the writer was probably Joshua.

Vs. 1-4 The Lord showed Moses the land. He couldn't have seen all of this territory from Mt. Nebo, even on a clear day. The fact that God promised it to Abraham is an assurance to Moses that even after he is gone, God will continue to lead Israel into the land.

Vs. 5-8 One question here is why God hid the gravesite. The standard, and probably correct, answer is that if Israel would have known where the body was, they would have brought it with them and made a shrine to Moses, possibly a place of worship.

V. 7 Apparently God kept Moses from wearing out, meaning on the other hand, that when we wear out, it is because God lets us. I think of Isaac losing his sight so early in his life, thinking he was going to die and then living another 40 years. If I had my choice, I'd go like Moses, but I don't think God will consult me and His choice will be for His glory, not mine. I'd still like to go out with my boots on.

V. 9 I find it interesting that Joshua is described as being full of the Spirit. It says spirit of wisdom, but we can guess it was Holy Spirit enabled wisdom. In the OT it doesn't mean Joshua was permanently indwelt by the Spirit (that couldn't happen until Christ), but the Holy Spirit was close to him, guiding him. Also, what is the spirit of wisdom? God gave wisdom to the men who built the tabernacle. It was that same sense of order and creativity and insight that was with God as He created the universe.

Vs. 10-12 It is also interesting that the miracles are mentioned as *deeds of terror*. That is our language struggling to express the Hebrew. The signs created a sense of amazement and fear and awe. As awesome as that was, sin trumps wonders. All the people older than nineteen who saw those miracles, and followed Moses out of the land, were overthrown in the wilderness by their sin.

Jesus is the prophet "like Moses" who has come to lead Israel and all of mankind. In Jesus' short time on earth he did more wonders. Moses knew God like a friend, but Jesus knows God as Father. As for the "deeds of terror," wait until the Lamb begins to open the seals on that book. Moses was used to show Egypt the fear of God for a few months. Jesus will introduce a seven-year "sound and light" show on earth that will get everyone's notice. And those who follow Jesus will be led in the Spirit to the Father and true rest.

### **Joshua 1-2**

Joshua 1

Vs. 1-9 This is a great section of Scripture - God's first address to Joshua after Moses' death.

V. 2 Wouldn't you freak out if God told you to get two million people to do anything? This is that spirit of wisdom working in Joshua. In Joshua's head, thanks to the Spirit, this was a piece of cake.

V. 4 God would begin to give this land to Israel. In Joshua we'll see God break the military power of Canaan. After that, it would have been easy for the people to go to God and then take more and more of the land. That means that the second phase of the conquest would have been easy, but contingent on their obedience. And there is the rub. They didn't obey or seek God. The full ownership of the land will come during the Millennial Kingdom of Christ.

Note how often God tells Joshua to be *strong and courageous*.

If you have never memorized v. 8, now would be a great time. Instead of memorizing only v. 8, memorize 5-9.

V. 8 Should we be any different? Joshua was to read Deuteronomy daily, meditating on it *day and night*. But do you see that he was supposed to speak of it? In order to speak of it, he had to be totally submerged in God's heart and thoughts.

Vs. 10-18 I get inspired reading what the Reubenites, Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh said to Joshua. Why do you think they close their message to him with, *Only be strong and courageous*? This strength and courage were to have come from Joshua's own faith and confidence in God. I was reading about Jesus teaching His disciples, saying that a disciple is not above his teacher. It makes me think that those who lead others don't need to be perfect, but they should be strong and courageous in the couple of things we really need to be doing as we follow Christ in the harvest. Faith is contagious. So is doubt and hypocrisy.

Joshua 2

Vs. 1-7 It is interesting that there is no mention of a conversation with God regarding the spies. Joshua only sent out two spies. Tradition has it that one of these spies is the guy who married Rahab, Salmon (or Salma). In that case we know Salmon's father was Nahshon. This would have made Salmon one of the prominent, godly leaders of Judah. I'll bet the other spy was from the tribe of Ephraim.

That the spies went to a prostitute almost gives the idea that they were like sailors finally hitting land and looking for a good time. Rahab was certainly a prostitute, but most likely she also ran an inn. They were looking for a place to stay. These guys would have been close to the Lord. The fact is that God is very insistent on telling us that she was a prostitute. Even back then, God was in the business of saving tax collectors and sinners.

Vs. 2-5 The entire city was on "red" alert for Israel. This is evident from the king's search for the spies and Rahab's words in v. 9.

V. 6 So why would Rahab risk her life like this?

Vs. 8-14 Now, what about the faith of Rahab? This is a little complicated, at least in our thinking; because she was a prostitute, a Canaanite woman who should have been killed, and she lies like a trooper (whatever that means). There is some tension in all of this. God not only shows her incredible mercy, but she marries Salmon (some think he's one of the spies), and through Rahab comes the entire Davidic line of kings and, eventually, the Messiah.

In my thinking, real faith has three parts: Information, Acceptance/Trust, and Doing.

Notice the information that Rahab had. It dates all the way back to the Red Sea, 40 years earlier. This means that on hearsay, she believed the entire story about Egypt and she was aware of Israel in the wilderness for the past 38 years.

She certainly believed and trusted this information. She mentions in that she and everyone else were shaking in their sandals. Rahab goes on to make the connection of all that Israel had done to the supremacy of their God. Look at v. 11. Wow!

What is interesting to me is that, to this point, everyone in Jericho went this far with what they believed. Rahab says that everyone knew this information and that they believed the information. So why was she saved?

Rahab risked her life to save the spies. She *did* something. Doing is what completes real faith. The demons believe in God and tremble (James 2:19). The demons had the right information, and really knew that God was there; but they made the wrong response. So did the people in Jericho. Rahab made the response of faith, honoring God. She may have lied, but she was also

risking her life for God and these men who followed Him. Ends do not justify the means. She was an immature believer, but she was a believer.

The response of Jericho's city fathers was to pursue the spies to kill them..bad choice. This showed their hearts. If they had approached Joshua with terms of peace, they would have been told there could be no peace and they would have had to move before Israel got there. If they really believed the stories, they would have moved and saved their lives. They should have known they didn't have a chance.

This is why Rahab was saved. She had real, amazing faith. Everyone knew about the Red Sea, and Egypt and Sihon and Og and believed the truth of those stories. Everyone understood that Israel had an awesome God. Rahab personalized that information, and when given an unexpected opportunity by God, she did something. She honored God. And in spite of her past and fear and weakness, God honored her right back, hundredfold.

Vs. 15-21 It is also notable that the spies were close enough to the Lord to be able to make this kind of a deal with her. It showed something of their faith, too.

Notice that if her house was built into the city wall, God must have protected this part of the wall.

Vs. 22-24 These two spies, like two other spies 38 years ago, came back with a good honest report. Notice that even in this, God gave them an adventure and a story. I'll bet Joshua and the other leaders were sitting on the edge of, of, well, whatever they were sitting on, as the spies told this story. They would have been utterly convinced that the Lord was in this. That's cool of God to encourage us through these types of adventures. In the harvest you get lots of these.

### **Luke 13:22-14:6**

Luke 13:22-35

Vs. 22-30 Since it doesn't say that one of the disciples asked Jesus this question, it could have been someone from the crowd that followed Him. The answer suggests that Jesus was answering someone who was not yet saved. This answer is very similar to what He said in Luke 12:57-59, which was also to the unbelieving crowd.

V. 24 The word *strive* means to agonize, to fight, scratch and struggle. The crowds treated Jesus like their good buddy; but the danger of judgment was always present, and believing in Jesus was no trifling matter. And, it isn't as easy as unbelieving people think it is. We know that it is only a prayer away, but in reality, there is a struggle of heart against one's own sin that takes place. Without God's help, none of us would have made it. If a person was on a sinking ship, they would be crazy not to struggle to get to a lifeboat. And if God threw them a rope and made a way and they were too "relaxed" about taking the help, they would only have themselves to blame.

V. 30 This is definitely to the disciples and Jesus will talk about this later.

Vs. 31-35 Can you imagine the surprise these Pharisees received when they died and immediately found Jesus sitting on a throne? Shocking.

Jesus is trying to help the people, and these guys are trying to scare Him away. Jesus' route to Jerusalem was not very direct. You could say that He was making a final tour of Israel, sometimes actually heading away from Jerusalem, but the destination was where He was to offer Himself to God for mankind.

He weeps over Jerusalem here, though He is miles away. He will do this in Luke 19:41 as He views Jerusalem from across the valley. Notice the words Jesus uses here. How can people actually say that Jesus didn't think He was God?

Luke 14:1-6

When I read this, all I can say is that Jesus was strong and courageous. Jesus was invited again to eat with a Pharisee and He went, but He knew the Father was leading Him into a place of testimony, teaching and conflict. And this is only a small part of what happened at the Pharisee's house. There will be more tomorrow.

I think for us as disciples, a part of "abiding in Christ" is seen in how Jesus abided in the Father. Jesus expected the Father to lead Him every minute of every day. Jesus was always in the presence of the Father and understood every situation as being a part of the Father's working. Jesus always knew that He had the resources of the Spirit and Jesus always knew that He was completely secure in the Father's care. I think if we abide in Christ as we follow Him in the harvest, this same security we see in Jesus will be ours too.

### **Psalm 79**

This looks like it was written after the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. Verse 11 talks about prisoners. By this time, there was a well established and protected Jewish community in exile in Babylon and the synagogue system was being developed. A descendant of Asaph, apparently, got inspired.

Vs. 1-4 The only time this happened in Jerusalem in the Old Testament is when the Babylonians broke in at the end of Zedekiah's reign. Notice that Asaph is appealing to God on the basis of the destroyed temple and city and the scorn brought to God's name. It is interesting that we read in the song of Moses that when God let that happen, the nations would know that God allowed it because of Israel's idolatry.

Now, there may also be a prophetic element to this that looks ahead to the Tribulation. What happens to the Jews and all other believers in Christ during the final 3.5 years of the Tribulation will make all other persecutions pale in comparison.

Vs. 5-7 Using Jacob's name is probably a way of appealing to God to remember His promise to Abraham. Notably, the Tribulation is called the time of Jacob's trouble. Notice that v. 5 is echoed by the martyrs in Revelation 6:10, *They cried out with a loud voice, "O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"*

Vs. 8-10 Since the people in Jerusalem during the siege were mostly ungodly (there were exceptions) these verses seem to look to the future when those who follow Christ will be viciously persecuted during the Tribulation. This sounds like something the martyrs in Revelation ask of God.

Vs. 11-13 The retribution asked for here came upon Babylon and will come upon the nations in Revelation. Verse 13 is said from a heart of faith, and this will be true of those who stand with Christ in His kingdom.

Since this psalm is inspired by the Spirit of God, the thoughts of this psalm are also God's thoughts. That's something for us to think about when we try to understand God. Look at what Jesus said regarding the narrow gate. He is not just about inclusion and warmth and love and tenderness. There is also judgment and punishment. These are also part of the good news, and this is why the Lord has left us here and sent us into His harvest.

### **Proverbs 12:26**

We do have a responsibility to those around us, including the guy next door. To whom much is given, will much be required. It's a matter of compassion and love. We've been shown love, and now as disciples of Jesus in the harvest, we need to try to help others find what we have found.